



California Department of Veterans Affairs

NEWS FOR VETERANS

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The following is a letter from Secretary Johnson to CDVA staff dated April 7, 2004.

Today marks my 7th week here at the Department and I have started to get pretty comfortable with the issues, the challenges and the opportunities we have in fulfilling our mission of serving veterans. We have achieved some success already. With the help of our excellent legal department, we were able to get the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with Shasta County for the joint operation of the Northern California Veterans Cemetery. There are 55 state-run cemeteries in 30 states and this will be the first for California. Construction will start in the fall of this year with the opening occurring one year thereafter.

Our negotiating team has also finalized our MOU with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Los Angeles outlining the basis on which we will receive the land and establish a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship in the operation of our Veterans Home of California in West Los Angeles and the satellites in Lancaster and Ventura. Congratulations to John Hanretty and the Construction Division for bringing this forward. Interestingly, these two issues (the cemetery and the new homes) are the subject of continuous interest and support by our many Veterans constituency groups and we are delighted to be able to report good news to them.

Recently Governor Schwarzenegger sent out Executive Order S-6-04 regarding his commitment to equal opportunity (*see the text of his Executive Order copied below*). I share that commitment and as such, I have attached that order to this e-mail for all to read. Yesterday I shared my goals for the next 12 months with the management team and one of those goals relates to improvements in the personnel side of our business, in terms of managers receiving the required training for their positions, staff members receiving timely and appropriate evaluations and adherence to fair and best human resource practices such as illustrated by the equal opportunity executive order. I have also been reviewing the State Personnel Board's past audits of our Department and will be making sure that we are doing our best to address those areas of concern. Toward that end, I have also directed our Personnel Department to ensure that our Hiring Panels and our Qualifications and Appraisal Panels include a panelist from outside the department and strive for diversity on our panels.

I also outlined some of my other goals, such as (1) Operating within our budget (2) Achieving national averages in the number of veterans receiving benefits for which they are entitled (3) Meeting all deadlines on our construction projects (4) Developing a quality/service/productivity dashboard for a monthly review on how we are performing (5) Developing a good communications plan for our constituents, including legislators, staff and veterans organizations and (6) Getting a plan in place for Barstow. These goals are all measurable and relate to all three of the missions of the department.

One final thought. The budget challenges are not yet behind us and we will continue to have to use our best efforts at working smarter and finding ways to perform our work more efficiently.

Some of our challenges will require help from other departments and I am meeting with Secretaries in other departments to try and seek changes. This is not a process that can be accomplished in a week or even a month but will be on going in line with the Governor's request that we "think out of the box." Thank you for your efforts in each of your areas to serve our veterans.

Tom Johnson, Secretary

**EXECUTIVE ORDER S-6-04
by the
Governor of the State of California**

WHEREAS, this nation and state were founded on the principle of freedom and equality; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted the landmark Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, making equal employment opportunity without discrimination the law of the land; and

WHEREAS, the 1972 amendment to the Civil Rights Act extended these provisions to all governmental agencies; and

WHEREAS, numerous federal and state laws, regulations and executive orders prohibit discrimination in employment against any person based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, marital status or sexual orientation in the California state civil service system; and

WHEREAS, the California labor force is comprised of skilled and talented workers from all segments of the state's richly diverse population, enabling the state to lead the nation in innovation; and

WHEREAS, this work force diversity is of great value in building a more inclusive and qualified state civil service whose highest principle is duty to an equally diverse public; and

WHEREAS, this administration is strongly committed to ensuring equality of employment opportunity in all aspects of employment where every person can enjoy to their fullest capability the birthrights of our democracy.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of California, do hereby issue this order to become effective immediately:

1. Equal employment opportunity for all individuals is the policy of the State of California in all its activities. All state officials, managers and supervisors shall vigorously enforce this policy.
2. All state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions shall recruit, appoint, train, evaluate and promote state personnel on the basis of merit and fitness, without regard to age, race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, disability or other non-job-related factors.
3. All state agencies, departments, boards and commissions shall have clear, written directives to carry out this policy and to guarantee equal employment opportunity, without retaliation or reprisal, at all levels of state government.
4. All state agencies, departments, boards and commissions shall regularly review their employment practices to ensure equality of opportunity in employment. Such actions include the use of inclusive recruitment, properly validated selection procedures and the elimination of non job-related and discriminatory practices.
5. All state agencies, departments, boards and commissions shall fully comply with all constitutional and civil service statutory and regulatory requirements to administer and enforce this policy.
6. The State Personnel Board shall provide statewide leadership, coordination, technical guidance and enforcement regarding efforts to fully achieve equal employment opportunity and non-discriminatory employment practices within the state civil service.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have here unto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this the thirty-first day of March 2004.

/s/ Arnold Schwarzenegger

Governor of California

This is the first in a series of ongoing emails to provide useful information to the veterans' community in California. Individuals or organizations wishing to subscribe to this service or to unsubscribe may contact us via email at newsforveterans@cdva.ca.gov or by telephone at **1-800-952-5626** or **916-653-2192**. For more news and information of interest to veterans, visit our website at www.cdva.ca.gov.